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TAGS PREL, EAD, MASS, KISL, ZI, SO, NI, SU, SF, XA, UK  
SUBJECT: AFRICA: U.S. VERSUS UK PRIORITIES, LONDON THINK  
TANKS COMMENT  
REF: A. 08 LONDON 1426 B. 08 LONDON 2477 C. LONDON 289 D. LONDON 266 E. 08 LONDON 2882 F. 08 LONDON 3165 G. 08 LONDON 2917

Classified By: Political Counselor Richard Mills, reasons 1.4 (b/d).

1. (SBU/NF) Summary. During the transition to the Obama Administration, London think tanks have been active in discussing USG and HMG priorities. HMG's Africa policy lacks focus and is unable to internally prioritize its Africa policy. Zimbabwe should/will remain a priority for the UK for historical reasons, but the USG's focus is "surprising," as it is largely a contained issue. Somalia should be more of a priority for HMG, given the UK's history with the region, the large number of Somali Diaspora in the UK, and the fact that the UK has a permanent UNSC seat. Nigeria, especially the Niger Delta and corruption issues, should be a greater HMG priority because of Nigeria's financial links to the UK, and the fact that the UK has a permanent UNSC seat. Sudan, including the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and the Darfur crisis, should remain top USG and HMG priorities because of the regional impact. South Africa's desire for a permanent UNSC seat should be the leverage point for the USG and HMG to actively improve relations with South Africa. The global economic downturn will have a greater affect on Africa than the IMF and World Bank are predicting. Engaging African Diaspora communities should be a key USG and HMG focus, as Africa is the most politically globalized continent. Engaging Muslims in Africa may be a mechanism to also improve relations with the Middle East and South Asia. End summary.

UK Africa Policy Lacks Direction, Unable to Prioritize

2. (SBU/NF) Most London-based think tank Africa specialists thought HMG had lost its ability to prioritize on Africa, especially since the October 2008 election.

3. (C/NF) Embassy comment: Forsyth, while hit-or-miss on follow through, was generally able to corral UK government departments into setting a coherent Africa policy. Wood (ref B), has meant no serious consideration of the UK's priorities in Africa. The UK's National Security Strategy also failed to provide a clear direction on Africa. End comment.

4. (SBU/NF) Several think tank analysts thought that Zimbabwe should and will remain a top priority for the UK, but that HMG's history of bomb attacks in Zimbabwe should be a greater HMG priority.

Somalia

5. (SBU/NF) Given the UK's history, the large number of Somali Diaspora in the UK, and the real security threats that community may present to the UK, Somalia should be a greater HMG priority.

6. (C/NF) Embassy comment. Cabinet office officials have told us that they consider Somalia a serious security concern, but they have not been able to do much more. End comment.

Nigeria

7. (SBU/NF) Think tank West Africa specialists, citing Nigeria's significant financial links to the UK, large Diaspora community, and energy issues, should be a greater HMG priority.

8. (C/NF) Embassy comment: Although the Foreign Office appears interested in developing a more focused and strategic policy on Nigeria, the HC's lack of interest in the prisoner transfer agreement has prevented HMG from moving forward on any other meaningful issues (refs E, F, and G). End comment.

Sudan

9. (SBU/NF) All the think tank analysts consulted agreed that Sudan, including implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) and if the CPA is implemented, should be a greater HMG priority.

South Africa

10. (SBU/NF) These analysts also all agreed that now was the time for both HMG and the USG to improve relations with South Africa. It is time to engage the Diaspora.

The Global Economic Downturn and Africa

11. (SBU/NF) Royal African Society specialists thought the global economic downturn would affect Africa significantly, much more than the IMF and World Bank are predicting.

Engaging the Diaspora

12. (SBU/NF) Several think tank specialists noted the importance of the African Diaspora. With the global credit crunch, they thought, the African Diaspora could be a key USG and HMG focus.

Islam

13. (SBU/NF) The RUSI Africa specialist suggested that HMG and the USG should do more to engage Muslims in Africa, as it is an easier entry point for the USG and HMG to improve relations with Africa. Visit London's Classified Website: [http://www.intelink.sgov.gov/wiki/Portal:Unit\\_ed\\_Kingdom](http://www.intelink.sgov.gov/wiki/Portal:Unit_ed_Kingdom)

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